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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 001332

SIPDIS

NSC FOR MIKE DEMPSEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2009

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [VE](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: VENEZUELA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. BRASILIA 492

[B](#). BRASILIA 1070

[C](#). BRASILIA 1104

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR DENNIS HEARNE. REASONS 1.4
(b)(d).

[1](#)1. (C) The chief of the Brazilian Foreign Ministry's OAS Division (MRE/DEA), Nelson Tabajara, told Poloff on 28 May Brazil was "surprised" by recent negative developments in Venezuela and has not formulated an official response. Tabajara said the "inflamed" environment has raised the GOV's "level of insecurity" to such an extent that no one can predict Chavez's next moves.

[1](#)2. (C) Tabajara said Brazil's Ambassador to Caracas had recommended Brazil not/not provide MRE or other official observers to this weekend's "reparos" process. (Note. We were unable to confirm this with the MRE's Andean Division Chief. End note.) Tabajara said the GOB expects the appeals process to move forward 28-30 May, and said Brazil will "react strongly and with the U.S." if there are irregularities. Tabajara noted also that the upcoming OAS General Assembly will provide a forum for Brazil and others to take positions in light of events.

3.(C) Poloff asked Tabajara about 25 May press reports indicating President Lula da Silva's strong concern about the formation of pro-Chavez militias. Tabajara was not aware of any recent intercessions by President Lula da Silva or FM Amorim with the Chavez government on the militias or the signatures appeals.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment. On the eve of this important weekend, we believe that the GOB will fulfill its Friends obligations in the event of a melt down in Venezuela. But we also doubt that the GOB has a contingency plan for decisive bilateral engagement with Chavez. Repeated queries over the past several weeks to candid and informed MRE interlocutors (refs) reveal anxiety but also a seemingly fatalistic approach -- at least at the professional working level -- to a matter that should be of high strategic concern to Brazil. We cannot judge whether confidential caveats have been registered by the GOB with Chavez in recent days, but we doubt it. If the situation does go critical, Lula could well pick up the phone to Chavez, but we are not confident that the GOB has a ready script for such a call, or that the message would be potent enough for meaningful impact.

HRINAK